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Officer Dennis Decker 49 felony counts of assault

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DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA – A Desert Hot Springs police officer was charged with 49 felony counts of sexual assault and his bail was set at \$2 million this afternoon.

"I'm setting it at \$2 million because there's two victims," Judge Charles E. Stafford Jr. said at the arraignment at Larson Justice Center in Indio.

The officer was arrested Thursday on suspicion of sexually assaulting his child. Information about the second alleged victim was not available.

The officer [Dennis Decker] who the Desert Sun is not naming at this time to protect the identity of the alleged victims — stood motionless in shackles and an orange jumpsuit as the judge read off the charges.

The assaults he is accused of committing happened between May 1996 and September 2006, according to court documents.

If convicted, the officer faces multiple life sentences, said supervising deputy district attorney Richard West, who is prosecuting the case.

The policeman did not comment, other than to tell the judge that he could not afford to hire an attorney. He makes \$64,000 a year and is on paid administrative leave.

He is being held at Robert Presley Detention Center in Riverside.

"I'm still in disbelief of this whole thing," said 17-year-old Heather Dunning after the arraignment. She said she knew of him when he was the police officer assigned to Desert Hot Springs High School. "They were reeling off charges and my hands were shaking," she said.

After working at the high school for two years, he went on to head the juvenile investigations unit of the police department and founded the police Explorers program, in which juvenile volunteers work alongside police officers.

The officer was arrested by District Attorney investigators while attending a police training class in Los Angeles.
